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(1) Editorial: Climate change summit; Expectations on U.S. displaying leadership

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
September 22, 2009

The international paradigm concerning measures to curb global warming has completely changed from a year ago.

The Bush administration had been negative toward taking measures (to curb global warming). However, the Obama administration, which succeeded it, has displayed a positive stance. In Japan, too, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama of the newly launched Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) administration has categorically pledged to cut greenhouse gas emissions to 25 percent below the 1990 level by [2020](#).

The high-level meeting on climate change hosted by the UN (the climate change summit) is to be held in New York on the 22nd with the participation of both President Obama and Prime Minister Hatoyama. The conference is the Hatoyama administration's debut in environmental diplomacy.

The 15th session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP15) is to establish a framework to replace the Kyoto Protocol, set to expire in 2012. Although industrialized countries and developing countries have held talks on emission cuts, they have been unable to bridge their differences. The degree to which they can reach agreement is of concern.

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Against this background the Hatoyama administration has announced a target of slashing emissions to 25 percent below the 1990 level. Some domestic industry circles strongly oppose the plan, while foreign countries have lauded it. We want the Hatoyama administration to proactively use the attention paid by the international community in promoting international talks.

The U.S. and China are the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases, responsible for 40 percent of the globe's carbon dioxide emissions. So the prevention of climate change depends upon them.

In June of this year the House of Representatives in the U.S. Congress adopted by a narrow margin the American Clean Energy and Security Act authored by Congressmen Waxman and Markey. The legislation stipulates a 20 percent cut in U.S. greenhouse gas emissions below the 2005 level by 2020. This is a step further than Obama's previous goal.

The bill incorporates an emissions trading system to realize emission cuts. It mandates the power industry to use recyclable energy sources such as sunlight and wind power for 15 percent of its energy needs by 2020. Obama aims to create jobs in the recyclable energy-industry, which he hopes will spur economic growth.

The U.S. and China have continued to take a stance of not cutting emissions before the other does. Whether the bill will be adopted by the Senate is unclear. However, we hope Obama takes the initiative on the matter.

Prime Minister Hatoyama has premised the 25 percent target on all key emitters agreeing to adopt ambitious goals. We want him to draw up a strategy to get not only the U.S. and China but also major emerging countries, such as India and Brazil, to participate in the initiative proactively. It is necessary to devise a mechanism for allowing (industrialized countries) to help developing countries in their efforts to cut emissions and count the results as part of their own cuts.

(2) Prime minister announces 25 percent emissions cut with political leadership in mind: Priority placed on sending messages, instead of coming up with specific measures

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
September 23, 2009

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama at the high-level meeting on climate change hosted by the UN (climate change summit) announced Japan's mid-term goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2020, compared with the 1990 level. It was the first message to impress on audiences both at home and abroad that a power transfer has taken place in Japan. In his speech, Hatoyama displayed his strong awareness of political initiative, a switch from the previous diplomatic style based on bureaucrat-led coordination of views that has continued for a long period of time. The strict mid-term goal will present a high barrier when the government coordinates its views with industrial circles and major countries, such as the U.S. and China.

Prime minister's speech added to agenda just in time

When the prime minister began to mention the mid-term goal in the speech given at the UN Headquarters, the audience applauded him. The

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international community responded coolly to the previous Aso administration's 15 percent cut in comparison with the 2005 level. All the more for that reason, a government negotiator proudly said, "Japan has never had a goal that attracted attention like this."

In stark contrast to former Prime Minister Taro Aso, who announced the mid-term goal that was set based on the preparations made by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Environment Ministry over a period of one year, Hatoyama insisted that politicians should take the initiative. The prime minister's speeches given on the 7th and the 22nd are believed to have been prepared by lawmakers, such as Senior Vice Foreign Minister Tesoro Fukuyama, who are well versed in the global warming issue. Bureaucrats' participation in the cabinet ministerial meeting held at the Kantei on the 20 was greatly limited.

The summit program at first did not include a slot on its agenda for the Japanese prime minister to make a speech. However, a senior Foreign Ministry official and Ambassador to the UN Yukio Takasu directly asked Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to let Japan's new prime minister deliver a speech. Hatoyama was ultimately given a slot among the 12 speakers just a few days before the meeting.

Speaking of the meaning of the new goal, a negotiator said, "That goal will enable Japan to use a hard-line approach in international talks on specific items." It means that the nation with a higher goal figure can take the initiative when talks on a framework to curb global warming to be adopted in 2013 (post-Kyoto Protocol) move into full swing and an emissions trading system and international rules for assistance to developing countries are set, according to the same source.

Cornerstone of new administration

However, since priority has been placed on sending messages, coordination of views with business circles such as the Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren), whose opposition to the strict goal is increasing, has not yet begun. There are also signs of friction in the ruling camp, because a policy agreement with the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the People's New Party (PNP) was reached on Sept. 9 to review the government's mid-term goal, but the specific figures had not been determined yet. The SDP is against the construction of nuclear power plants. Some say that it will be impossible to cut emissions substantially without nuclear power plants.

The Hatoyama administration's political style is to send policy messages first before looking into specific measures, as can be seen by the halting of the implementation of the fiscal 2009 supplementary budget or the discontinuation of the construction of dams. This style can be evident in other areas as well. Whether it will succeed in curbing global warming will prove to be a decisive test for the new administration.

(3) Editorial: Foreign ministerial talks mark shift from blind obedience to equality

The Japanese and U.S. governments are standing at a new starting line for reviewing the agreement on U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ)

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realignment, including the relocation of the Futenma Air Station to Henoko in Nago City. We hope for a shift from blind obedience to the United States to an equal Japan-U.S. relationship founded on the people's trust.

At the Japan-U.S. foreign ministerial talks, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that implementation of the existing agreement is the basis for USFJ realignment, but Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said the Japanese administration disagrees with parts of it. The two sides reaffirmed their positions and agreed to continue discussions.

While no significant progress was made at the meeting, we can detect signs of change from the two governments' previous positions of obstinately rejecting any modification in the plan for building a Futenma replacement facility.

Previous foreign ministers have mostly avoided friction with the U.S. on security issues. For this reason, the significance of Mr. Okada's conveying his "objection" to even parts of the realignment plan directly to Ms. Clinton should not be underestimated.

Ms. Clinton said at the meeting that "the Japan-U.S. alliance is a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy and is indispensable for the security and prosperity of Asia and the Pacific" and indicated willingness to discuss all alliance-related issues. "We would like to build a deeper and more sustainable Japan-U.S. relationship," responded Mr. Okada.

Most Japanese would probably accept the idea that the Japan-U.S. relationship is the linchpin (of Japanese foreign policy). However, this is no reason for overemphasizing the military aspect of the alliance or neglecting international cooperation.

The attitude of blind obedience to the U.S. -- as evidenced by former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's statement "the better the Japan-U.S. relationship is, the better Japan will be able to build good relations with China, South Korea, and other countries in the world" -- will not do. We hope that the new Japanese and U.S. administrations will adopt policies that strike a balance between the bilateral relationship and international cooperation.

Policies that cater only to U.S. wishes and defy the popular will are doomed to be short lived. This is exemplified by the Futenma issue, which has virtually foundered after an agreement was reached in 1996 to return this base. Policies sans popular support will remain castles in the air no matter how beautifully they are packaged. We hope that the new administrations in both countries will keep this in mind.

The history of Japan-U.S. negotiations since the end of World War II suggests that in discussions on building a new closer bilateral relationship there will arise demands for Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense, which is prohibited by the Constitution.

However, if the constitutional constraints of one's own country are neglected, Japan cannot claim to be a pacifist country under the rule of law. The Hatoyama administration should not be distracted by the advocates of hawkish propositions and should stand firm on its position that Japan's role is to make up for deficiencies on the U.S. side within the bounds of the Constitution. Now is the time to

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aim for a deeper Japan-U.S. relationship and a new form of security alliance embraced by the people.

(4) Editorial: Scrapping of Eastern European MD plan; Also move forward with U.S., Russian nuclear disarmament

TOKYO SHIMBUN (page 5) (Full)
September 19, 2009

The United States has announced the scrapping of its plan to deploy a missile defense (MD) system in Eastern Europe. A source of conflict with Russia has been removed. We hope that the two countries take advantage of this situation to further promote cooperative bilateral diplomacy and to spur the reduction of strategic nuclear arms and other aspects of disarmament.

U.S. President Barack Obama has said that the focus of MD deployment in Eastern Europe is Iran, not Russia. This can be seen as an attempt to alleviate Russian concerns about the deployment and seek its cooperation in resolving the Iranian nuclear issue.

The MD deployment plan was a project of the previous Bush administration. On the grounds that the development and deployment of long-range missiles by Iran would threaten European countries, the administration formulated a plan to deploy for defense purposes a ground-based interception missile in Poland and to build a radar facility in the Czech Republic by 2012.

Russia, which is adjacent to Eastern Europe, reacted strongly to the deployment of American missiles under its nose and regarded the deployment as a measure to apply pressure against it under the pretext of an Iranian threat. In the summer of 2008, the U.S.-Russian confrontation became serious enough to term the "New Cold War."

In relation to scrapping the MD plan, the U.S. Department of Defense explains that the Iranian threat consists mainly of mid- and short-range missiles and that there will be a change in strategy to deal with this threat by deploying MD systems aboard ships at sea.

The Obama administration is implementing a change from power-based diplomacy. As a first step, the U.S. and Russia have agreed to work for a new agreement to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I (START I) expiring at the end of 2009.

In July the two countries agreed on a substantial reduction in the number of warheads and delivery systems. With this U.S. announcement to scrap the MD plan, prospects have become brighter for the two countries to reach an agreement in their nuclear disarmament talks by the year end.

President Obama will participate in the high-level meeting of the UN Security Council (UNSC) on September 24 and work for the passage of a resolution calling for the realization of a "world without nuclear weapons." The two nuclear superpowers, the U.S. and Russia, should demonstrate their readiness to take the lead in disarmament at this meeting.

There are also causes for concern. For instance, Russia may take the U.S. concession as a golden opportunity to expand its influence in Eastern Europe. We call on Russia to exercise restraint to avoid yet another confrontational situation.

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With regard to the Iranian nuclear issue, Russia once assisted with the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran and provided fuel for its reactor. It is reportedly opposed to the UNSC resolution imposing sanctions on Iran.

The Obama administration is expected to ask Russia to take part in the "international encirclement" to stop Iran's development of nuclear arms in return for scrapping the MD plan in Eastern Europe. This will be a litmus test for the new era of cooperative diplomacy by the U.S. and Russia.

(5) Editorial: Eastern European MD and nuclear arms: Implement bold "Obama disarmament"

U.S. President Barack Obama has announced a bold review of the missile defense (MD) plan in Eastern Europe, which has been a cause of dispute between the U.S. and Russia. This is probably part of the process of nuclear disarmament through cooperation between the two countries. President Obama will chair a high-level meeting of the UN Security Council on September 24 and is expected to present new proposals for achieving a "world without nuclear weapons." We remain hopeful about what "Obama disarmament" will be able to achieve.

The MD system in Eastern Europe, a project promoted by the previous Bush administration, calls for the construction of a missile interception base and radar facility in the former Soviet satellites of Poland and the Czech Republic primarily for the purpose of intercepting Iranian missiles. The Bush administration signed agreements with Poland and the Czech Republic on building these facilities, and NATO also approved the MD plan.

While some countries might be unhappy about the plan's discontinuation, we commend the Obama administration's decision.

Apart from the question of the technical feasibility of intercepting missiles, the plan raises the basic question of the soundness of the hypothesis of an Iranian missile attack against Europe. While the U.S. and Israel are suspicious of Iran, many European countries have friendly relations with it.

On the other hand, Russia has opposed the MD plan in Eastern European on the grounds that it is actually meant to intercept Russian missiles, and Moscow has announced it will suspend implementation of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty relating to the military balance with NATO. The Eastern European MD has been a disruptive factor in U.S.-Russian nuclear disarmament. It is hard to understand why this program, of doubtful effectiveness and necessity, has been allowed to heighten tensions between the two countries.

The Obama administration has changed the Eastern European MD system's interception targets from long- to mid- and short-range missiles, emphasizing its non-hostile posture toward Russia. This is probably meant to promote U.S.-Russian cooperation in dealing with Iran, but we would like the United States to think about where the real threat lies.

It is not absolutely clear whether Iran is indeed developing nuclear

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weapons, while it is obvious that North Korea, which has conducted several nuclear tests and missile launches, is the more serious and realer threat. We must learn a lesson from the Bush administration's failure to prevent the DPRK's development of nuclear arms because it had exhausted its energy in the Iraq War.

Arms management, nuclear disarmament, and the strengthening of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime will be the main topics on President Obama's agenda for the meeting on September 24. Although his policy is not to discuss the nuclear issues of specific countries, the world will never be safe if the U.S. and Russia, which possess 90 percent of the world's nuclear arms, do not move forward with nuclear disarmament and North Korea and similar countries do not relinquish their nuclear weapons.

We hope that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, Japan's representative at this meeting, will send a clear message on the predicament of Japan - the only atomic-bombed nation in the world - which is now exposed to a new nuclear threat, and present his vision for a "world without nuclear weapons."

(6) Editorial: Eastern Europe MD plan to be terminated; Will it help improve U.S.-Russia relations?

President Barack Obama has announced that his administration will end a plan to build a missile defense (MD) system in Eastern Europe. It will be a major shift in the United States' missile defense strategy in Europe.

The MD plan, which began under the former Bush administration, is designed to deploy interceptors in Poland and to build a radar base in the Czech Republic in anticipation of a threat from Iran's long-range ballistic missiles.

Naturally President Obama's decision has pleased Russia, which has opposed America's plan to deploy the missile defense shield in Eastern Europe, a region Russia regards within its sphere of influence. Moscow has been calling vocally for a halt to the plan, suspecting that its real aim is to contain Russia's nuclear capability.

Needless to say, the Obama administration did not make the decision in deference to Russia's concern. The decision derived from a shift in the United States' perception of the threat from Iran.

The President underlined the need to deal with the threat from Iran's improved short- and mid-range missiles rather than from its yet-to-be-developed long-range missiles, announcing that the United States will pursue a new MD program.

The Obama administration will aim for the development by 2020 of a new MD system that can cover all Europe. The administration reportedly plans to deploy sea-based SM-3 interceptor missiles in 2011 and improved ground-based interceptor missiles around 2015.

The plan to build a defense scheme that is swift and effective by deploying the proven systems sounds reasonable.

Nevertheless, European countries, which have been exposed to the

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threat from Russia, are being shaken by (President Obama's announcement). They have contributed to regional security as members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the post Cold-War era. They now fear that the United States might forsake them in spite of that.

Some in the United States are critical of (President Obama's decision), calling it a betrayal of U.S. allies.

Apparently in a bid to dispel such concerns, President Obama declared that the United States will take a joint defense step by exercising the right of collective defense in response to an armed attack on any NATO member.

President Obama probably hopes that his decision will help improve relations with Russia at the same time. Russia's cooperation is indispensable in pursuing nuclear disarmament and imposing tougher sanctions on Iran, which has not stopped enriching (uranium). The question is whether Russia will make concessions as the United States expects.

The United States has shifted the focus of its missile defense strategy in Europe to short- to mid-range ballistic missiles. That is exactly what Japan and the United States are doing in dealing with the threat from North Korea.

Arming itself with nuclear weapons, North Korea is targeting Japan with its Nodong mid-range missiles. Japan and the United States must improve the operation of the MD system.

(7) Japanese government has yet to disclose radiation-monitoring report of U.S. nuclear vessels

AKAHATA (Page 1) (Full)
September 23, 2009

The Japanese government told the Yokosuka Municipal Government in 2006, just ahead of the controversial arrival of nuclear-powered

aircraft carrier USS George Washington at U.S. Yokosuka Navy Base in Kanagawa Prefecture, that it was possible to release the U.S. military's data on the results of its environmental monitoring. But the data has yet to be publicized more than three years after the government made this announcement.

The U.S. military has conducted a quarterly environmental impact assessment every year since 1964 to check whether or not radiation is detected at Yokosuka port, Sasebo port in Nagasaki, and Nakagusuku port in Okinawa, which U.S. nuclear-powered aircraft carriers visit.

In the fact sheet that the U.S. submitted to Japan in April 2006 regarding the safety of U.S. nuclear-powered warships, it is noted that "the U.S. has presented in its report to the Japanese government every year the results of its examination of materials collected from the Japanese ports."

The U.S. says in its reports that no harmful effects on the human body or marine organisms have been found in the assessments.

In a written inquiry submitted to the central government on May 8, 2006, the Yokohama government asked whether it can obtain copies of the quarterly reports and if it cannot, whether an explanation will

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be provided. In response, the Japanese government clearly said in its letter dated June 12: "Publicizing them is possible."

To a question posed by the Akahata, however, an official of the Foreign Ministry's Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement Office replied: "We are carrying out coordination with the U.S. side on the possibility of publicizing the reports," indicating that publicizing the reports is still impossible.

Then prime minister Taro Aso handed an official letter to former Yokosuka mayor Ryoichi Kabaya noting: "I am convinced that the safety of U.S. nuclear-powered vessels has been ensured." Kabaya replied: "I understand the government's position on the safety of the vessels." Since then, the Japanese government has approved the deployment of nuclear aircraft carriers.

(8) Nago mayor worried about rough sailing in USFJ realignment talks after Okada-Clinton meeting

OKINAWA TIMES (page 23) (Excerpts)
September 23, 2009

Nago, Ginowan - Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada indicated at his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on September 21 (in the early hours of September 22, Japan time) his intention to enter negotiations on issues relating to U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) realignment. While Clinton did not respond specifically to this, both concerns about prolonged negotiations and expectations on the relocation of the Futenma Air Station out of Okinawa have been expressed in Nago City, where the proposed replacement facility for the Futenma base is located, and in Ginowan City, where the Futenma base is currently located.

Nago mayor Yoshikazu Shimbukuro mentioned the contents of the Japan-U.S. foreign ministerial talks and commented positively on "this sign of the new administration's diplomatic posture of actively conveying its thinking." With regard to Futenma relocation, he said: "It is necessary to examine foreign policy and defense issues carefully. Relocation out of Okinawa will be difficult in reality, so the negotiations may experience rough sailing."

He added: "Nago will watch the Japanese and U.S. governments' next steps closely in dealing with this."

Ginowan Mayor Yoichi Iha gave a positive assessment to the Okada-Clinton talks. He said, "The fact that the intention to discuss USFJ realignment, including the return of the Futenma base, has been confirmed between the two countries will be the first step in an early solution to the base issues."

"The return of Futenma was agreed upon in 1996 during the Clinton administration but this issue is still unresolved and remains to be a pending problem all these years." He added: "The U.S. government must also be aware of the seriousness of the problem. In any case, this will be the start of the realignment of U.S. military bases, including Futenma."

(9) Editorial: The U.S. and China should not sow the seeds of protectionism

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
September 21, 2009

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Tension is high between the U.S. and China over trade issues. President Obama has imposed safeguard tariffs (emergency import restrictions) on Chinese-made tires and the Chinese government has indicated that it will take retaliatory measures. If the two countries carry on with their tough stances, this may trigger a worldwide chain reaction of protectionism.

The dispute over tires is not structural trade friction arising from a head-on clash of national interests between the two countries. The United Steelworkers were the ones who demanded the import regulation, and even the U.S. tire manufacturers are against the safeguard tariffs.

President Obama's decision is probably the result of his taking heed of the forces in the U.S. Congress close to the labor unions. It is understandable that he is being solicitous to the unions because deliberations in Congress on medical insurance reform are currently deadlocked. However, bending trade policy due to domestic considerations may bring about harmful effects on a global scale.

It is worrying that other governments in the world may lean toward trade control following the U.S. example. Various forms of import restrictions have already been put in place since the Lehman shock last fall as emergency measures.

China claims that the Obama administration's action was unjustified and has taken its case to the WTO. While the safeguard tariffs may not actually violate the WTO agreement, they certainly reflect a strong protectionist tendency.

If the Obama administration is seen to be negative toward free trade, similar trade restrictions may become rampant in the world. This will inevitably cause the multilateral trade talks (the Doha Round), whose resumption was just agreed upon in early September, to lose momentum again.

The Chinese government is threatening to impose import restrictions on U.S.-produced chicken and automobiles as a retaliatory measure. Behind this is the lobbying of domestic industries apprehensive about the economic outlook. China seems to want to show a tough stance toward the U.S. for now.

It is unacceptable for the two trading giants, the U.S. and China to sow the seeds of protectionism in the world because of their political circumstances at home. The world leaders, including the leaders of the U.S. and China, have just declared their determination to prevent the rise of protectionism at the G-20 summit in Washington last April.

The U.S. and China should reconfirm their will to stand by free trade at the financial summit in Pittsburgh this week and resolve this minor friction over tires at an early date. The flame should be extinguished while it is still small before protectionism comes to engulf the world.

ROOS